

Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Currey, Ranking Members Representative McCarty and Representative Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Genesis Cubilette and I am a resident of Groton, Connecticut. I am testifying in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure, and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources.

The overpopulation of school resource officers, primarily in urban schools, has impacted children of color more than anyone. I was a straight A student and can remember my own encounters in New London High School. As a very well-behaved student there wasn't anything that could have possibly done to be removed from any classroom, but the one day I'm not "dressed appropriately" a school SRO hand picks me out of a classroom in the middle of state testing, to keep me in his office so I disrupt anyone. Another time, I shared what I had learned outside of school about Black Liberation and was escorted out of the class for being "hostile". I am a Black girl, I never saw anything of this sort happening to my white peers. This is only a small example, compared to the things I saw happening to friends of mine who needed actual support instead of punishment. Many of those friends of mine were pushed out of the school. We need to end the school-to-prison pipeline and equip educators with the proper resources to teach children in a safe inclusive environment.

According to research by Connecticut Voices for Children, there's no evidence School Resource Officers (SROs) make students or staff safer, but schools with SROs have more arrests and more expulsions than their peer institutions without SROs.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that centers the social-emotional well-being of students through care, resources, learning, and restoration.

Thank you for your time, Genesis Cubilette